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# A study on investigation of the relationship between mobbing and depression according to genders of high school students

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to define the depression symptom levels and the mobbing executions' levels they are subjected to according to genders of vocational high school students. The ranks of being subjected to mobbing and the depression levels are examined via the genders of the students. According to the findings, there is a significant correlation between the genders of the students and being subjected to mobbing, but there is no statistical correlation between genders of the students and the occurrence of depression symptoms. As a result of the statistical analysis, even though the male students are subjected to mobbing more than the female students, there is no statistical difference between the levels of depression symptoms.

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**Keywords:** Gender, mobbing, depression

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## 1. Introduction

Gender is a feature that is examined by various disciplines and in a many different ways. This feature has been the study field of science and technologies such as biology, social sciences such as sociology, anthropology beside health science and physiology (Dökmen, 2004). Gender is the inherent genetic, physiological and biological features of the individual as being male or female. In this context male and female individuals differ in their biological features (Akin, 2003).

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The socially identified characteristic features of males and females; is defined as socially structured roles, responsibilities and behaviors. For this reason, while defining the social gender as a cultural and learned feature; not the biological differences but the view of society about males and females their senses their thoughts and expectations on behaviors, social values and roles are defined (Dökmen, 2004; Yılmaz et al 2009). The point of view to gender can be changed culture by culture also can be varied with the people who are in the same culture by the time. The individuals behave according to the values given by the society while they are performing their roles they have (Şimşek, 2011; Terzioğlu, 2003).

Gender roles which should be addressed in terms of both gender, such as the roles and the expectations that are given by the society because of the individual's gender, and social sexism occurs can affect the health of both genders. Social gender discrimination structures the lives of women and men and finally this variety means much more than difference (Akin, 2007).

### ***Gender and Mobbing***

In general mobbing can be explained as non ethical and inhospitably manners or forces those are directed systematically, planned, continually repeated by one person or more people to a person or a group working in institutions (Leymann, 1996; Kök, 2006; Özler et al., 2008). As the studies about the relation between mobbing manners and genders examined in literature, in accordance with the versatile roles and the expectations loaded on genders by the society according to their status. It is realized that sometimes against men, sometimes against women and sometimes against equally for both genders.

In a study held on lawyers in USA, it is stated that women lawyers are subjected to mobbing more than their men colleagues at the Office (Meglich, 2008). Also a meta-analysis study held by Rutondo et al. (2001) has stated that women feel mobbing behaviors more rigid than the men, supporting the previous view.

Nonetheless in many studies, it is observed that both women and men are almost equally subjected to mobbing manners (Keashly et al., 1994; Leymann, 1996; Einarsen, 2000; Vartia, 1996). In a study held on assistant doctors (a status both student and medical doctor), it is examined that there is no meaningful difference according to gender with the mobbing perceptions of the assistant doctors (Dikmetaş et al., 2011). Again, the study results held by (Baş & Oral, 2012) showed that there is no meaningful difference between males and females' subjection to mobbing manners. This view is also supported by another study held by Koç and Bulut (2009) on teachers that gender doesn't create any meaningful difference on subjecting mobbing manners.

In schools, male students are subjected to mobbing behaviors two-third more than female students. Male students use physical force or threat while female students are doing this with indirect way such as gossip, kidding and social exclusion. Even though male students behave despotic to both male and female students from different classes, female students choose the girls in the same class or at the same ages as their victims. At the studies it is found out that male and female students are equally subjected to mobbing manners (Roland, 1989; Elliot, 1992; Olweus, 1995). But the study held by Houbre et al. (2006) shows that while the rate of female students' as tyrant is less than male students, the rate of female students is more than male students as victims. The study of Chapel et al. (2004) has also supported the view of Houbre et al. (2006). Therefore in a study held by Altınöz et al. (2010) with college students, it is examined that male students have been subjected to mobbing manners more than female students.

### ***Gender and Depression***

Depression is one of the most important problems observed in humans. Depression is described as a situation covers continuous and intense sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, slow down in thinking, talking and movements, stagnation, worthlessness, meanness, weakness, reluctance, and slow down at physiological functions (Wells and Sturm, 1995; Erim, 2001). Due to a theory developed by Beck et al. (1979), the reason of depression is not an affect defeat mainly but a cognitive disorder. Some of the studies related on depression epidemiology stated that depressive symptoms are 13-20% seen in the community although they don't meet the diagnostic criteria (Boyd & Weissman 1982; Gelder et al., 1989).

In some studies investigated the relationship between gender and depression, it is observed that there are meaningful differences while there is no significant relation in the other studies.

In these studies, there is a significant effect of the criteria uses on the results such as the quality and the quantity of the sample group selected, perception level of the subject, coherence of the measurements. That has been used, the studies made by survey or made in clinical conditions. Waelde et al. (1994) states especially that there are conflicts about the gender difference in depression in the subclinical samples.

In the studies held in different countries and cultures it is observed depression cases of women are two times more than men (Piccinelli & Wilkinson, 2000). It is commonly accepted that the gender-specific differences at depression is coming from interaction of many factors including biological, physiological and socio-cultural impacts (Kornstein, 1997). Although it is not known exactly why the incidence and prevalence of depression in women is higher, it is explained by more hormonal changes, social norms and to encounter different stressors (Doğan, 2000). Hormonal factors can mainly affect this high ratio. If a man realizes he is depressive, he is reluctant to demand help but women can share their depressive moods easier than the men (Sandoz, 2012). However it should be considered that men cannot be determined easily because it cannot be acceptable for men that they got into a depression so they don't go to the doctor. According to Bayar (2014), incidence of depression in women and men can be classified as; 1.Married man, 2.Married women, 3.Single or widowed woman, 4.Single, widowed or divorced man, 5.Separate living and divorced man.

According to Yıldırım (2004), gender variable significantly predicts the depression. The average of female students' depression scores is appeared significantly higher than the average of male students' depression scores. Kapıran (2001) has stated that the differences in the relation between gender and depression is significant and contrary to girls in a study held on high school students.

In the studies of Erözkan & Öy (1995), it is found out that depressive tendencies are differentiated in terms of genders and it is emphasized that the vulnerability of female students after depression is more than male students. In a study held by Garrison and Jackson (1990), it is stated that females are getting higher scores than males and it is found out that girls have more depressive symptoms. Tubman & Windle (1995) have concluded at their studies that showing depressive symptoms at a high level is related with being female student. In another study they had found that female students have more depression scores than male students in all depression tests (Lewinsohn & Hops, 1993). The studies of Jolly and colleagues support this diagnosis (Jolly et al., 1994).

Despite that according to Dökmen (1998), although it is mentioned that women are more depressed than men by the findings, in this research no strong correlation has been found between depression and gender. In a study held on university students it is concluded that gender is not an efficient factor on depression (Ceyhan et al., 2009). In a similar study depression rates of girls and boys are comparable at lately adolescence period (Ehrenberg et al., 1990). The study that has done by Aydın (1998) on university students there are findings such as the depression symptoms of students are not vary with gender. At the study of Hisli (1998) as a result of the comparison gender by depression, it is found that there is no significant difference between averages by both variables. In the study of Dökmen (1997) held on gender and gender roles with depression, no significant difference found between males and females. At a study of Gökçakan (1997), although the percentage of depression is higher at girls than boys, the difference does not mean that depression is more common in girls than boys statistically. Again in a study made by Aydemir et al. (1996), it is found that gender has no effect on depression. At the study held on university students by Erözkan (2005), there is no relation between gender and depression.

As a result, we can declare that gender difference has a cultural supported effect rather than biological effect on depression (Silverstein & Perlic, 1991). At the studies held on depression, the rate differences between males and females are related with the gender roles occur by the specialties of division of tasks and cultural differences together with biological affect (Küey & Cengiz, 1993).

## 2. Method

### 2.1. The Importance and the Aim of the Study

In this study university students in vocational high schools are examined by survey methods in which level that they are subjected to mobbing behaviors expressed by them by survey method and the level of depressive symptoms observed in terms of gender. The aim of the study is to state the relation between the students at universities' vocational high schools being subjected to mobbing and depression and also the level of the depression according to their gender. This study is important to bring up the differences and the levels of both genders that are subjected to mobbing and their depression symptoms observed in consequence of the social judgments, values, roles and expectations that are imposed by society to women and men. The awareness of gender-specific characteristics will contribute to individuals to develop a consciousness and a mentality contrary to mobbing and depression that affects private and social life of the gender negatively. In this context the explication of the relations between gender-specific characteristics and mobbing and depression will provide to manage and control mobbing behaviors and measures can be taken against depression.

### 2.2. The Method of Collecting Data

In the study, questionnaire was used as the method for collecting data. The surveys have been answered face to face by the university vocational high school's students. Questionnaire consists of four sections. In the first section a scale consisting of 40 questions was used to define levels that the students are subjected to mobbing behaviors. In the second section there is a scale consisting of 21 questions prepared to identify the students' psychological moods. The study has been done between 06.05.2013 - 10.05.2013. The information about the scales used is given under the title 'Data Collection Tools.

### 2.3. Limitation and Sampling of the Study

This study has been done in vocational high school students connected with Akdeniz University. The questionnaire has only been applied on the students attending to second class because the school years are believed to influence the personality structure of the students. The study's main mass consists of Vocational High School of Social Sciences of Akdeniz University. Totally 300 students have been participated at the study. Because the variety of survey and number of questions were allot, many of and/or some of the questions 29 of the surveys excluded from the study. The volume of mass including active first and second class students was 2160, the volume of sample including only second class students was 271. Sampling ratio of the main mass is 12,5%. Lean Incidental Sampling has been chosen from Probability Sampling Technique to meet the required sampling.

### 2.4. Data Collection Tool

#### *Survey of Mobbing*

On the survey to examine the students' mobbing subjection level, a survey form consisted of 45 questions, named "Leymann Psychological Mobbing Scale" was developed by Leymann (1996), one of the first observers on mobbing and Negative Behavior (NAQ) Scale consisting of 14 questions that has been developed by Einarsen and Rakness (1997) and Salin (2001) was used to prepare a questionnaire consisting of 40 questions. As a result of reliability search of the mobbing survey scale created, overall reliability coefficient Cronbah's alpha has been found as 0,969. This value means  $0,80 \leq 0,969 \leq 1,00$ , the scale is highly reliable (Kalaycı, 2005).

#### *Survey of Mental Situation Analyze*

Beck Depression Index is a self-report scale developed by Beck (1961) to survey emotional, cognitive, somatic and motivational components. BDI is a tool to provide information by oneself is meanly used at the studies and clinics. The overall reliability coefficient of the depression scale consisting of 21 questions used in the survey has been found as Alfa=0,881. This value means  $0,80 \leq 0,881 \leq 1,00$ , the scale is highly reliable (Kalaycı, 2005).

### 2.5 Structure and Hypotheses of the Study

By the scales used in this study the level of the students' subjection to mobbing behaviors in terms of gender is determined and the students' depression situations are observed. Thus the relations between the students subjection

to mobbing behaviors in terms of gender and depression situations are observed. The hypotheses appearing in the study are classified below:

1. H1: There is a meaningful relation between the students' genders and being subjected to mobbing behaviors.
2. H2: There is a meaningful relation between the students' genders and their depression situations
3. H3: There is a meaningful relation between the level that the students are subjected to mobbing and depression.
4. H4: There is a meaningful relation between the level that the students are subjected to mobbing in terms of gender and depression levels.

## 2.6. Data Analyze Method

SPSS 16.0 for Windows program has been used to analyze the data in the study. At the program SPSS 16.0 for Windows in Alpha Model the data reliable analyze has been done. Cronbach's Alpha Method that is used to survey reliability of multivariate scales has been used at the test. The overall reliability of scales of Alpha values is shown in the 'Data Collection Tool' Part.

## 3. Findings

### *Findings on the Relation between Gender and Mobbing*

The first hypothesis of the study is "H1: There is a meaningful relation between the students' genders and being subjected to mobbing behaviors." At the analysis of this theory "t-Test" is used. The results of t-Test used to define whether if there is a difference in mobbing perception in terms of students' genders are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. The Relation between Gender and Mobbing

GENDER TYPE		N	Average of Participants		Standard Deviation
MOBBING PERCEPTION	Female Students	142	1,9225		0,03614
	Male Students	129	2,1935		0,05832
Variance Distribution		Levene Test for Equality	t-Test for Averages Equality		
		F	Sig	t	df
Equal Distribution		14,323	0,000	-4,032	269
Unequal Distribution				-3,954	216
					Sig.(2-sided)
					0,000
					0,000

According to the results of the participants' analysis, the average of female students (N=142) 1,9225 and male students' average (N=129) is 2,1935. This average shows that male students' perception of mobbing is more than female students' perception. Significance level at Levene Test is (P= 0,000) which is lower than critical value Sig.0,05. From this can be understood that the variances of the two groups are different. As the variances are different  $t = -3,954$  at Unequal distribution line and correspondingly value  $P = 0,000$  is taken into consideration. The result of Sig. (2-sided) also shows that (P= 0,000) there is a difference between male and female students levels that they are subjected to mobbing. In this context alternative hypothesis (H1) has been accepted.

### *Findings on the Relation of Gender and Depression*

The second alternative hypothesis of the study is such as "H2: There is a meaningful relation between the students' genders and their depression situations. In this theorem's analysis t-Test is used. The results of t-Test which is used to define whether if there is a difference on the perception of depression in terms of students' genders are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. The Relation between Gender and Depression

GENDER TYPE		N	Average of Participants		Standard Deviation
DEPRESSION PERCEPTION	Female Students	142	1,6338		0,80318
	Male Students	129	1,7132		0,95356
Variance Distribution		Levene Test for Equality	t-Test for Averages Equality		
		F	Sig	t	df
					Sig. (2-sided)

Equal Distribution	6,459	0,012	-0,743	269	0,458
Unequal Distribution			-0,737	251	0,462

According to the results of analysis measured by T-test the average of female students 1,6338 and the average of male students is 1,7132. This average means that male students' perception of depression is more than female students' perception of depression. Significance level at Levene Test is ( $P=0,012$ ) lower than critical value Sig.0,05. Hence the variances of the two groups are different. As the variances are different ( $t=-0,737$  in Unequal distribution line and correspondingly value  $P=0,462$  is taken into consideration. The result of Sig. (2-sided) also shows that ( $P=0,462$ ) there isn't a significant difference between male and female students' depression levels. Thereby the alternative hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) has been rejected. Nevertheless although there is no significant difference statistically, it is seen that the average of male students' perception of depression is higher than female students.

#### *Findings on the Relation between being subjected to Mobbing and Depression*

The third hypothesis of the study is that “ $H_3$ : There is a meaningful relation between the level that the students are subjected to mobbing and depression.” While this theorem is analyzed by t-Test (Table3), it is observed that there is a significant difference with the two variables. In this context alternative hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) has been accepted.

Table 3. The Relation between being subjected to Mobbing and Depression

Variable Name	Average of Participants	Standard Deviation	Dependent Two-Samples Correlation	Confidence Interval (%95)		Sig. (2- sided)
Mobbing	2,0517	0,56855	0,324	1,9837	2,1197	0,000
Depression	1,6716	0,87722		1,5667	1,7765	0,000

According to the results of the analysis, 271 students' average of being subjected to mobbing is (2,0517) and average of depression is (1,6716). At 95% confidence interval, the value sig (2-sided) is lower than 0,005. Also the confidence bounds of Mobbing and depression are not concurred. Thus we can state that there is a significant difference between mobbing and depression. The correlation between mobbing and depression is 0,324. On the regression analysis, the ratio of depression description by mobbing is 10,5%. We can say that the relation between mobbing and depression is not high and the rate of depression description of mobbing is low.

The fourth hypothesis of the study is that “ $H_4$ : There is a meaningful relation between the level that the students are subjected to mobbing in terms of gender and depression levels.” “Chi-square Test” is used to analyze this theorem. In the study it is examined that whether if there is a difference between male ( $N=129$ ) and female ( $N=142$ ) students according to they are being subjected to mobbing in terms of gender and depression levels (Table 4).

According to the results of the analysis done by Chi-square Test in Table 4, it is observed that at the Figure values the number of values which are expected to be lower than 5 are higher than 20% of total figure values. Therefore Chi-square test Linear-by-linear Association values are used. It is not stated that there is a significant difference statistically between the levels of being subjected to mobbing and depression in terms of gender.

Table 4. The Relation between being subjected to Mobbing and Depression In Terms of Gender

Mobbing Perception	Depression Perception	Gender		Total
		Female Students	Male Students	
I	I	16	6	22
	II	2	0	2
	III	0	1	1
	IV	0	0	0
	Total	18	7	25
II	I	61	60	121
	II	37	22	59
	III	19	18	37
	IV	1	1	2



III	Total	118	101	219
	I	0	4	4
	II	2	1	3
	III	1	5	6
	IV	2	0	2
IV	Total	5	10	15
	I	1	5	6
	II	0	0	0
	III	0	0	0
	IV	0	6	6
	Total	1	11	12
	<b>Table Value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2- sided)</b>	
	I (Linear-by-Linear Association)	0,688	1	0,407
	II (Linear-by-Linear Association)	0,282	1	0,595
	III (Linear-by-Linear Association)	2,423	1	0,120
	IV (Linear-by-Linear Association)	1,000	1	0,317

#### 4. Conclusion

Society's gender perspective can vary from culture to culture but also it can be ranged between individuals at the same culture by time. Nevertheless gender notion causes significant differences on women and men, their family, school, career choices and their lives. Thus women and men act according to judged values that are defined by the society while playing their roles at the society. These value models and formed roles impose ridiculous psycho-social impositions, cause to be subjected to mobbing and thus cause some troubles that can be up to depression.

In this study, in the consideration in terms of gender related to interpersonal sensitivity it is occurred that male students have been subjected to mobbing behaviors more than female students. In lots of studies female students subjected to mobbing at high levels or it is found that there is no significant difference between male and female students at the situation that they are subjected to mobbing. Although at a study held by Altınöz et al. (2010) on vocational high school students, it is stated that male students have been subjected to mobbing more than female students. Also on this study, the rates of male students have been subjected to mobbing are higher in comparison with female students. As it is seen there are parallel results in both studies affected by a lot of factors such as vocational high school students' society, the school and the student groups. Especially, the students cannot win a bachelors' degree; are primarily placed in vocational high schools in their localities with their preferences by passing without examination system. In this context it is appeared that the male students which have been placed in vocational high schools in their localities(at their cities or towns) are doing mobbing behaviors towards especially male students coming from the other cities and towns in a systematic and conscious way.

In this study, it is not stated that there is a significant difference in terms of gender on depression statistically. According to Erözkan (2005), actually a significant relationship can be expected between gender and depression. However considering in the context of university, both male and female students are living in similar conditions (such as exams, economic conditions, accommodation conditions, fellow and romantic relations) because of that there can be no difference with their depressive mental positions. Besides, each individual person may occasionally experience depression in current conditions (Erözkan, 2005). It is found that depression is experienced by women more than men in many studies. Conversely in the studies held by Hisli (1989), Ehrenburg et al. (1990), Aydemir et al. (1996), Dökmen (1997;1998), Aydın (1998), Gökçakan (1997), Erözkan (2005) and Ceyhan et al. (2009), it is stated that there is no effect of gender on depression. The results of these studies have similarities with our study as there is no difference between genders on depression.

When sex discrimination is not taken into account there is a significant difference between being subjected to mobbing and depression, meanwhile considering the relationship in terms of individuals' genders, it is observed that there is no significant difference (relation) between the levels that they are being subjected to mobbing and depression levels (Fig. 1). According to these findings while there is a difference between the situation of males and females that they are being subjected to mobbing, it can be defined as the depression levels of males and females which have been subjected to mobbing are almost equal to each other (no significant difference). It is expected that this study will contribute to the other studies that will be held on students of vocational high school in future.

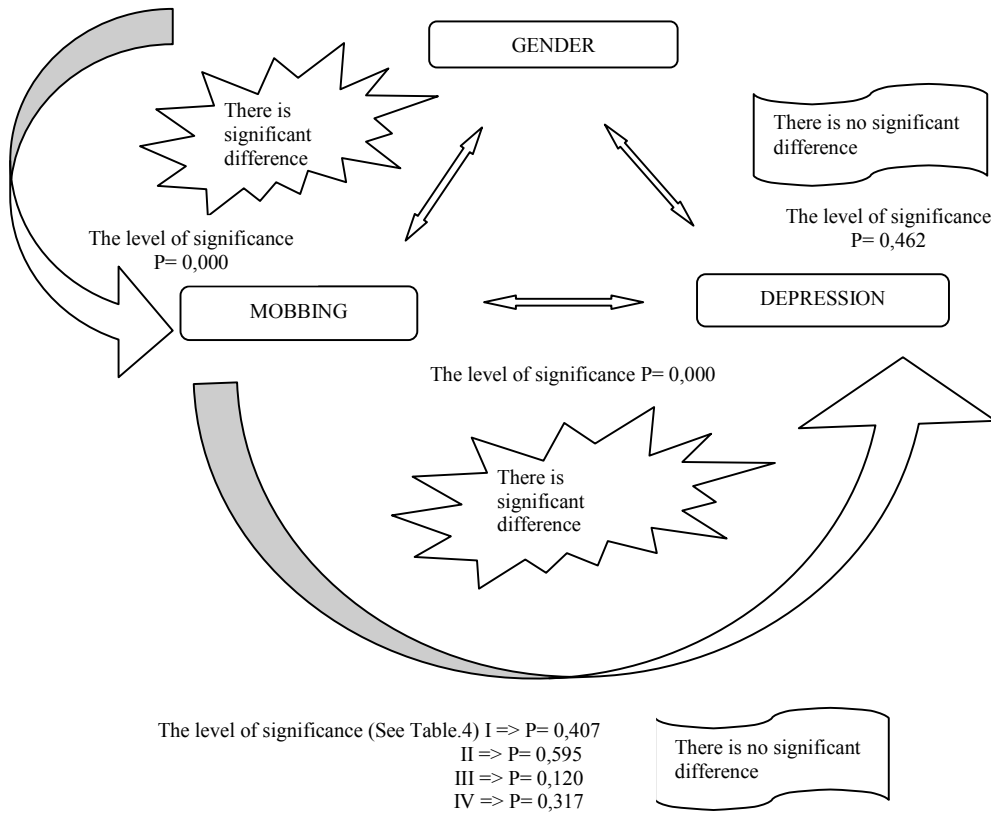


Fig.1. The Relationship between Mobbing and Depression according to Genders

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